



OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER YOUTH IN CARE

Young people who will turn 18 while in foster care have the opportunity to remain in care **or to leave** care on their 18th birthday. If you decide to leave foster care, you may request help and support through the "after care" program, called the Transitional Independent Living Program or TILP. You may also request to **return** to foster care. Young people who leave foster care at age 16 or 17 may also request aftercare services, but they may **not** return to foster care. Only young people who actually turn 18 while in the **Arizona State** foster care system may return to care. Turning 18 can be a very stressful time. It is important to have a good plan in place, whatever your decision.

All young people who are turning 18 while in the **Arizona State** foster care system and who are legal residents are signed up to continue health care services through the state Medicaid health care program. This program is called AHCCCS (Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System). A special category for insurance was created specifically for youth who turn 18 while in foster care. It is called **Young Adult Transitional Insurance or YATI**. You will be able to choose your health plan and must sign your application. There are no income restrictions and this coverage is available until your 21st birthday. You do not have to stay in foster care to receive this coverage, but you **must** stay in touch with the agency that is responsible for this program (Family Assistance Administration or FAA) in order to keep your address updated. **(There is also a yearly renewal process that is required to keep your health care coverage active.)**

All young people who were in foster care when age 16 or older may apply for financial aid for college or trade school, through the Education and Training Voucher program. You do not have to remain in care to apply for this aid, but must be enrolled in an accredited post-secondary education or training program to receive these funds.

The following pages provide more information about your options and services available to help you meet your life goals. We hope this information is helpful. Be sure to visit the state website at www.azdes.gov/dcyf/ilp.

Remaining in Care

Teens are encouraged to stay "in care" on a voluntary basis until their 21st birthday. "In care" means foster care, which is any type of out-of-home placement (foster home, group home, Independent Living Subsidy, etc.) that is supervised by the DCYF (CPS). Choosing to stay in care means you will have continuous assistance and support while you pursue higher education and/or employment training. You will continue to have a case manager who will work with you to develop an agreement that specifically states what your goals are, and what services and support you need to reach your goals. This agreement becomes your "case plan", which will be reviewed every 6 months and adjusted as needed. You will be expected to participate in whatever combination of education, employment activities and therapeutic services are necessary to help you reach your goals. You will have more responsibilities, make more decisions and have more freedom as you begin your adult life.

Many teens who choose to remain in care attend college, (in state or out of state) or employment training programs. Some teens are still working to complete high school or earn their GED before they move on to college or trade school. All teens are expected to pursue education and/or employment activities, and to develop life skills that will help them to build positive and supportive adult relationships; and to become self-sufficient.

Teens may continue living with a foster parent or in a group home until they are ready to move out on their own. Many young adults receive a monthly "independent living" subsidy to live in dorms while attending school, or to board (rent a room) with a relative, friend or through a community shared living program (such as Job Corps, Transitional Living Program, etc.). Young adults may also choose to share expenses with a roommate while renting an apartment or simply rent on their own. Being in care cannot extend past your 21st birthday. Some young adults stay in care for a while and then leave, but ask to return to care. If you leave care at age 18 or older, you can ask to return, up until your 21st birthday. (See the section on "Returning to Care" below.)

Independent Living Subsidy Program (ILSP)

The Independent Living (IL) Subsidy is an "out-of-home placement" option that is **ONLY** available to teens and young adults who are in care and age 17 or older. The IL Subsidy is a monthly living allowance, issued in your name, to "subsidize" (help) pay your monthly expenses. The amount of subsidy you receive is based on "need", and must be justified by your monthly budget. This subsidy is available until your 21st birthday **IF** you remain in care.

Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program

The Education and Training Voucher (ETV) is financial assistance to help pay the cost of post-secondary (beyond high school) education and training programs. Any person in care who is eligible to enroll in an accredited post-secondary program may apply for this voucher. Young adults who are under 21 years of age, and who were previously in foster care when age 16 or older, may also apply for the ETV. This includes young adults who were in foster care in another state or in a tribal foster care program. Students may receive up to \$5,000 per year through the ETV. The amount of the voucher may NOT exceed the "total cost of

attendance". Applications are available online (www.azdes.gov/dcyf/ilp) or through your case manager or local ETV Coordinator.

Transitional Independent Living Program (TILP)

The state also provides "aftercare" services, which are available to any person in Arizona age 18-21, who was in a State or Tribal foster care system when they were age 16 or older. These "former foster youth" are usually living on their own, and no longer have an open service case with the DCYF/CPS. The service available through the TILP includes short term support and assistance (including some financial support) to help former foster youth get through "rough spots". A TILP case manager will meet with you to talk about your needs and goals. Services and support to be provided will be written into a case plan that you sign. The TILP services may be provided as often as needed, until you turn 21, as long as you are actively participating in your service plan.

If you find that you are in need of long-term support and assistance, you may want to consider returning to care. You must be working cooperatively with your TILP case manager in order to make arrangements to return to care. "Returning to care" means that you will transition from working on a plan and receiving services through the TILP case manager to working on a plan and receiving services from a DCYF/CPS case manager. The biggest advantage of returning to care is the long-term support DCYF/CPS can provide, which may include the independent living subsidy.

Re-entering Care

If you left the Arizona state foster care system when you were 18 or older, you may request to return to care. This is done by contacting the TILP aftercare services provider. You will be required to work with the aftercare provider for a period of time, in order to take care of immediate needs and to develop a plan for transition back into DCYF/CPS care. You may request to re-enter care anytime until your 21st birthday. Re-entering care means that all of the services and support provided to those who chose to remain in care (see above), will be available to you.

Please remember that you are required to demonstrate "acceptance of personal responsibility" for your part in creating your individualized case plan and actively participating in services.